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STATE VACCINATION:

WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO

SOME PRINCIPLES OF ANCIENT JUDAISM.

BY

J. H. LEVY,

*Late Lecturer on Logic and Economics at the Birkbeck Institution
and the City of London College.*

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STATE VACCINATION : WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SOME PRINCIPLES OF ANCIENT JUDAISM.

SHORTLY before Mr. J. H. Levy was about to start for the Continent, in September, 1896, in order to attend the Berne Conference of the British, Continental, and General Federation for the Abolition of State-Regulated Prostitution, he was asked to speak at a public meeting to be called to express sympathy with a fellow Israelite, Mr. Henry Levy, who had been imprisoned because he declined to have his child vaccinated. To this invitation Mr. J. H. Levy was obliged to plead that he would be in Switzerland at the time of the meeting; but, in the letter conveying this plea, he added, *inter alia* : "The people of my own race, it seems to me, are specially bound to detest the inoculation mania and all its works. Anything more opposed to the spirit of the ancient Judaism than the insertion of an animal disease in the human body I find it difficult to conceive."

This letter was read to the meeting, and the above passage was reported in the press. Upon this, Mr. Harris, also an Israelite, and a member of the Whitechapel Guardians, who had prosecuted Mr. Henry Levy, wrote to Dr. Adler, the Chief Rabbi, "asking his opinion on vaccination."

It should be explained, for the benefit of the Gentile world, that Jews have no ecclesiastical chief such as Roman Catholics have in the Pope. Dr. Adler is not only a merely *local* Chief Rabbi, but his jurisdiction does not extend over all Jewish congregations in England. The Reform Jews—who differ from the Orthodox Jews much in the same way as Protestant Christians differ from Catholics—have no such chief, and even the Sephardic section of the Orthodox Jews have their own *Hhakham*, the present holder of that office being

a man of wide erudition who is universally held in esteem. This diversity may astonish most people; and this is little to be wondered at, since Mr. Israel Abrahams confesses that, when he undertook to write his recent very meritorious work, *Jewish Life in the Middle Ages*, he "did so under the impression that Jewish life was everywhere more or less similar, and that it would be possible to present a generic image of it. Deeper research has completely dispelled this belief. Possibly," he adds, "the reader may note with disappointment that my book reveals no central principle, that it is a survey less of Jewish life than of Jewish lives."* And, a few pages farther on, he says: "Jewish life gained more than it lost by the freedom of the individual, the freshening of the atmosphere, and the avoidance of clerical arrogance."†

The Chief Rabbi replied to Mr. Harris's question that Mr. J. H. Levy "was not justified in making the statements contained in the letter; that the most competent medical authorities were agreed as to vaccination being a prophylactic against small-pox, and added that its use was in perfect consonance with the letter and spirit of Judaism."

To this Mr. J. H. Levy replied, in the *East London Observer* and the *East London Advertiser*:—"Those who wish to find the basis of my opinion should turn to Leviticus, chapter 19, verse 19, and Deuteronomy, chapter 22, verses 9 to 11. The crossing of animal with animal, and even of vegetable with vegetable, is here forbidden. I need scarcely tell even casual readers of the Pentateuch that still more is the crossing of the animal and the human forbidden. And this is not a mere casual or isolated law. It is harmonious with the whole body of laws relating to regeneration on the one hand, and hygiene on the other. What is the use of the elaborate regulations prohibiting the use of unclean animals as food, if animal filth of the most virulent description is introduced directly into the human blood? What is the sense of turning up one's nose at a grafted orange, and grafting on a healthy child microbic 'lymph' from a diseased cow?

"I repeat, sir, that the whole of the modern inoculation system, from Jenner to Pasteur and Koch, is abhorrent to the

* Introduction, p. xxiv.

† p. 37.

spirit of *ancient* Judaism. When this system of poisoning our blood in order to keep our blood from being poisoned has passed to that Hades of historic superstitions where are to be found blood-letting and salivation, and other once fashionable fads patronised by 'the most competent medical authorities,' men will turn to that grand old system of internal and external cleanliness which was of the essence of the ancient Judaism, and will recognise how much wiser it was than the modern pseudo-scientific doctrine of salvation by filth."

Mr. Henry Levy, who had so incontestably shown his sincerity and devotion, seems to have doubted the possibility of the authenticity of the Chief Rabbi's reply, as reported. So he wrote to him the following letter :—

159, Wentworth Buildings,
Whitechapel.

October 18th, 1896.

REVEREND SIR,—Permit me for a few moments to encroach on your valuable time in order to settle a very important question which is arousing great interest in Whitechapel. Your name was mentioned by Mr. John Harris at a meeting of the Whitechapel Board of Guardians, during a debate on compulsory vaccination. Mr. John Harris said he received a letter from you stating that vaccination was in consonance with the letter and spirit of Judaism.

On my own behalf, and also on behalf of other friends, I write to ask if your views have been correctly reported? This is a very serious matter for me. I have been taken to Worship-street Police-court, and have been sentenced to imprisonment, and I have endured imprisonment at Pentonville Prison rather than to have my child's blood contaminated by diseased matter called vaccine. Neither I or any of my friends can for one moment think that you would inculcate the duty of using disease as an ally in order to guard against a disease which can only be fought by cleanliness and purity.

In order to show you that I do not stand alone in this matter, I send a cutting with this letter from this week's *East London Advertiser*, in which Mr. J. H. Levy, who is not known personally to me, writes on the same question,

and I enclose a copy of a declaration made by Mr. Abraham Harris, of Newcastle-place, and sent by him to the White-chapel Board of Guardians. Asking the favour of an early reply,

I am, Reverend Sir,
Your obedient servant,
HENRY LEVY.

To this letter the following reply was sent :—

Office of the Chief Rabbi,
22, Finsbury-square,
London, Oct. 19th, 5657.

DEAR SIR,—The statement of Mr. Harris is quite correct. It seems to me a great folly to disobey the law of the land in regard to vaccination, which has been instituted solely for the welfare of the citizens of the State and in obedience to the teachings of sound science.

Mr. J. H. Levy is not an authority on medical science, his opinions on the subject have therefore no value.

Believe me,
Yours faithfully,
H. ADLER.

To this second letter of the Chief Rabbi, Mr. J. H. Levy replied as follows, in the *East London Advertiser* :—

TO THE EDITOR.

SIR,—Some of my friends at the East End seem to expect that I should make some rejoinder to the repeated personal attacks of the Chief Rabbi. I do so very unwillingly. His dialectical methods are not mine. He says I am “not an authority on medical science,” and that my opinions on vaccination “have therefore no value.” I suppose the former of these statements means that my name is not to be found in the Medical Directory. I have not bought a £15 medical degree, as Jenner did. But if, because of this, my opinion adverse to vaccination is worthless, Dr. Adler’s opinion, that it is “sound science,” must be held equally destitute of value, for the same reason. But, Mr. Editor, I altogether demur to the weighing of “opinions” in this manner. The worth of a man’s conclusions on any point

are to be determined by the weight of the evidence he can marshal in their support, not by any *à priori* judgment as to his "authority." If I were to state that the square on the hypotenuse of a right-angled triangle is equal to the squares on the other two sides, and were to cite Euclid's demonstration in proof of this, it would be no answer to me to say: "You are no authority on geometry. I cannot find that you have ever taken a mathematical degree, and your conclusion therefore has no value." I did not merely state my opinion on the point at issue. I expect no man to share my opinion merely because it is mine. I stated the reasons—or some of them—for the faith which is in me. And I shall hold to that faith till some person can show me that the balance of evidence is on the other side. Mere dogmatic assertions, by whomsoever made, I shall entirely disregard. Dr. Adler will find some difficulty in converting the democracy of this country to his theory of guidance by "authorities." What would be the state of our laws now if we had consented to be led solely by lawyers? Our great steps in legal reform have been attained in the teeth of strong opposition from high legal authorities; and even now the great difficulty in the way of ameliorating our semi-barbarous penal code is to be found in the resistance of judges and prison authorities. Where should we be with regard to religious freedom and equality before the law, if the course of our politics had been determined by the ecclesiastical authorities? Step by step, the emancipation of Dissenters, Catholics, Jews, has been won in defiance of opposition by the bench of bishops. And a similar phenomenon is observable in medical politics. For twenty years, a medical clique succeeded in inflicting on this country that abomination of abominations, the Contagious Diseases Acts; and the same clique is now intriguing for their re-enactment. Medical authority has sustained vivisection—that handmaid of the inoculation system—till all Europe resounds with the cries of tortured animals, and men and women, debased by these cruelties, naturally turn to hunting down the Jews, who are a minority in every country in which they are found. I have confined myself, in this letter, to dealing with Dr. Adler's plea for authority. With the Vaccination Question, as a whole, and especially

with its relation to the ancient sanitary system of my own people, I shall have an opportunity of dealing at the meeting in your neighbourhood at which I have promised to speak.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

J. H. LEVY.

25th October, 1896.

On Tuesday, 17th November, a full meeting (chiefly of Jewish race) assembled in the large hall of the Jewish Social Club, Mansell-street, Aldgate, to hear an address from Mr. J. H. Levy on the above subject. "Owing to the view the Chief Rabbi has taken, and the correspondence thereon, intense interest was manifested, the lecturer being listened to with rapt attention, interspersed with hearty applause." Mr. H. S. Schultess-Young, Barrister-at-Law, presided. Among those present were Messrs. Alfred Milnes, M.A., H. N. Mozley, M.A., A. W. Hutton, M.A., W. L. Beurle, A. G. Thorn, J. Hunns, J. H. Lynn, Secretary to the National Anti-Vaccination League, C. Wilkinson (Lewisham Board of Guardians), J. R. Brunning (Jewish Board of Guardians), J. Collins (Whitechapel Board of Guardians), John Brown (Chairman, Mile End Board of Guardians), and J. F. Haines (Hon. Secretary, Tower Hamlets Branch, National Anti-Vaccination League).—The Chairman briefly opened the meeting, and the Hon. Secretary, Mr. J. F. Haines, read the correspondence.

Mr. J. H. Levy then delivered the following address :—

I have a favour, Mr. Chairman, to ask of the Non-Jewish portion of my audience. I desire with their permission, to address myself specially, this evening, to those of my hearers who are of the same, Hebrew, race as that to which I have always esteemed it my good fortune to belong. I do this, not because I desire to foster in my fellow Jews a political particularism to which I am strongly opposed. Nor do I wish to throw theological prejudice into the balance, in the decision of political and scientific questions. I thought that my record would have saved me from such imputations. But I have been asked whether I was about to appeal to the gallery. Sir, there are some questions—questions in which the appeal is made directly to human

sympathy and to the love of truth and equity—on which I would rather appeal to the gallery than to the stalls. The culture that comes from mere wealth may be worth much, but its tendency is not to widen the sympathies and strengthen the love of justice. Quite the reverse. The Hebrew prophets teem with warnings against the seductions of mere riches, and the deadening of the sensibility to wrong that too often comes with it.

I make no excuse, therefore, that I appeal to the masses in this matter. The main point which I shall, this evening, ask you to decide is not a medical one, or a theological one, but a political one—one which you must virtually decide when you choose your representative in the House of Commons—one for the decision of which there is no necessity that you should come to any conclusion as to the efficacy of vaccination. I shall ask you to affirm that compulsion in this matter is unjustifiable. I have, ever since I first began to think over the matter, held that view—even when, in the fulness of my ignorance of the merits of vaccination, I bowed to what those around me held to be medical authority, and had my children vaccinated. Even then I held that my acceptance of vaccination would not justify me in forcing it on parents who did not accept it. I may yield to my medical man's authority for myself, and for the children who are under my care. But surely I can have no right to force it on others who dissent from it. I may hold that my neighbour's child is in danger; and, if I think so, it is my duty to try to convince him of that danger. But I have no right to coerce him into the adoption of my view; and the fact—if it be a fact—that those who agree with me are more numerous than those who agree with him, gives me no such right. Mere numbers do not justify us in interfering with our neighbour's freedom, or minorities—and Jews are a minority in all countries—would have no rights at all.

It was just this sort of interference which happened in the well-known Mortara case. Let us do justice to the Roman Catholics who took the young Mortara out of the hands of his parents and brought him up in their own faith. They were, no doubt, quite sincere in the belief that the Jewish child was threatened with a fate compared with

which even the worst attack of small-pox is a mere flea-bite. I recollect the indignation which was expressed here in England at the abduction of the young Mortara; but I reminded many of those who gave vent to this feeling, and who were vaccinal coercionists, that they were flogging their own backs. What could they say to the clerical coercionists? Nothing at all. The assumption on which compulsory vaccination is justified would also justify every orthodox Christian community in depriving all Jewish parents of the religious care of their children.

Do not suppose that either the clerical or the vaccinal compulsionist is necessarily a bad-intentioned man. He is very seldom that. When he has not taken the hue of his thought from the flood of opinion in which he is submerged, he is usually a puzzle-headed man who has lost his way over an ethical question. He argues:—"Either the vaccination doctrine is true or it is false. If it is false, there is an end of the matter; but if it is true, why should we allow parents to inflict on their children—that is, the whole British community of the future—an unnecessary risk of a horrible disease?" He does not see that he is, by arguing in this way, begging the question. We have no means of dividing propositions into those which are certainly true and those which are certainly false. All that it is in our power to do is to judge as best we can by the evidence presented to us; and all that we have done or can do when we say that a proposition is true, is that we have examined that evidence for it and have convinced ourselves that it is true. But our mere conviction does not justify us in persecuting our neighbour who has it not, into conformity with our belief. This is a point which I should like to press on the attention of Mr. Chillingworth, a member of your Board of Guardians. He seems to think that the majority of the Vaccination Commission have been guilty of some inconsistency, because, while they believe, in a mild and qualified sort of way, in the efficacy of vaccination, they recommend that it be not enforced on those who are conscientiously opposed to it. I cannot see where the inconsistency comes in. In order to make this inconsistent we should be obliged to affirm that everybody is logically bound to compel others to conform to every doctrine which he holds to be true and good.

The truth is that it is not the majority of the Commission, but the minority—my friends Dr. Collins and Mr. Picton—who have laid themselves open to a serious charge of inconsistency. These gentlemen have drawn up an admirable report, showing that the evidence does not support the vaccination doctrine, and that its enforcement “is neither possible, nor expedient, nor just.” Still they go out of their way to recommend that, with the exception of the repeal of the compulsory clauses of the Vaccination Acts, those Acts should be maintained. In other words, these gentlemen hold that the vaccination doctrine is false, but that it should be established and maintained at public expense, because, forsooth, the majority are supposed to believe in it. If a majority of the people of these islands believe in vaccination, why should they not be left to support it out of their own earnings? The more preponderant their numbers, the meaner is their coercion of their fellow-citizens into the payment of rates or taxes for the support of a medical church from whose doctrines they conscientiously dissent. What right the majority have to force the minority to support a doctrine which that minority believe to be false and hurtful, Dr. Collins and Mr. Picton have not explained. If the majority have this right of coercing the minority—of compelling them to work part of the day for the support of that to which they are opposed, why have they not also the right of coercing them further into vaccinating their children? In the downward march to tyranny, it is only the first step which costs anything.

I have now completed the first step of my argument—the only step which is really essential for political purposes. I have endeavoured to show that a vaccinationist majority—supposing it to exist, which is very doubtful—is not within its right in forcing its convictions on a dissentient minority. Let those who believe in vaccination make themselves and their children safe. If we are in error, the natural penalties of our mistake will surely be heavy enough. Let the vaccinationists look on in calm security, while we are swept off the face of the earth as the result of our contumacy.

Let me now take you one step farther. Not only would you be doing wrong, if convinced of the truth of the vaccination doctrine, to force that doctrine on others who are

unconvinced ; but I hold that the arguments in favour of vaccination are altogether worthless, and that the practice itself is " a grotesque superstition."

Jenner, the founder of vaccination, was apprenticed to a country surgeon, and afterwards was sent to be a pupil of John Hunter. He made himself useful to Hunter, and at his house met Banks, who afterwards became President of the Royal Society. In 1772, he returned to the country and set up as a medical practitioner. On 13th March, 1788, he read his paper on the cuckoo, before the Royal Society ; and in the following year, he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society. In all this, his acquaintance with Hunter and Banks no doubt stood him in good stead. -

What I think about this paper on the cuckoo you may read in my little essay entitled, " The Bird that Laid the Vaccination Egg." But it was this piece of shoddy science on which Jenner afterwards traded ; and when the value of his vaccination nostrum was challenged by Dr. Ingenhousz, he promptly stood on his position as an F.R.S.

Jenner found that the Gloucestershire dairy-maids were sometimes afflicted with a disease of the hands, which they caught from the teats and udder of the cow, and which they called cow-pox. A legend had grown up among these uncultured people that cow-pox acted as a preventive of small-pox. This legend was perhaps based on nothing more than the fact that the names of the diseases both ended with the syllable " pox." One of the oldest ideas to be found in the folk-lore of medicine is that maladies are to be cured by that which in some way resembles them, the resemblance often being merely in the names and not in the things. Thus, the bite of a dog was to be cured by the root of the dog-rose. Pliny says that dogs have a worm under their tongue which, carried three times round the fire, is given to persons bitten by a mad dog, to prevent hydrophobia. We have here the germ of Pasteurism.

Jenner adopted this Gloucestershire legend, and called cow-pox *variola vaccinae*, which, being Latin, would go far with some people to establish its scientific value. The medical profession being very much in want of a line of retreat from the position they had taken up on small-pox

inoculation, adopted vaccination without such examination as they might otherwise have given to it.

How was the case for vaccination made out? Some people seem to think it was by statistics; but they forget that these statistics could not be in existence till vaccination had already been adopted. The attempt was made, in the early history of vaccination, to establish it by experiment. These experiments were of course performed on human beings. Of their utter recklessness I will give you a single instance.

“On the 16th of March, 1798, Jenner took virus from a sore upon the hand of a stableman, Thomas Virgoe, who had been infected while washing the heels of a greased mare, and inoculated it upon the arm of John Baker, aged five years. The record of the experiment is sufficiently brief: ‘He became ill on the sixth day with symptoms similar to those excited by cow-pox matter. On the eighth day he was free from indisposition.’ So far as the text is concerned, that is all. A coloured plate is given of the boy’s arm, representing a stage of the infection probably later than the eighth day, although we are left to guess the date; the large, whitish vesicle has fallen in, there is evidently a sore of some depth beneath the brown sloughing cuticle and there is an angry, brick-red zone of erysipelas for some distance around. If the child was free from indisposition on the eighth day, it was only because the full force of the filthy infection had still to be felt. A mere look at the collapsed vesicle in the picture will satisfy any practised eye that sloughing ulceration was imminent, and the brick-red colour of the skin around is equally ominous.

“There is no doubt that Jenner intends the narrative of this child’s inoculation with horse-sore virus to conclude with the reassuring statement that, on the eighth day, he was free from indisposition. It is only in a footnote on a subsequent page, inserted to explain why John Baker was not tested with small-pox after being horse-greased, that we read: ‘The boy was rendered unfit for inoculation from having felt the effects of a contagious fever in a workhouse soon after the experiment was made.’ The child, it appears, was rendered unfit for inoculation by unhappily becoming a corpse; he felt the effects of a contagious fever, soon after

the experiment was made, to some purpose, for he died of it."*

Jenner launched a large number of medical men on these experiments, which were conducted in the most unintelligent manner. In reading the account of these experiments, one scarcely knows which to wonder at most, the absence of logic, or the absence of common humanity, of those who indulged in them.

From Jenner's day to this, experimentation on the lower animals and human beings has grown concurrently with the extension of the inoculation system. All Europe resounds with the cries of tortured animals, the victims of sham science; and the hospitals are made use of for like experimentation on human beings. Thirteen years ago a prominent medical man put forward and defended, in the pages of the *Standard*, the practice by which the poor in our hospitals "are made use of otherwise than for treatment"—by which they are used as *corpora vilia*, vile bodies, upon whom experiments are tried for the benefit of others. When I called attention to this, later on, in the Health Section of the Social Science Congress, not one of the medical men present repudiated this monstrous doctrine.

So much for the moral aspect of these experiments. Now a word as to their logical aspect. The majority of the Vaccination Commission contend that, "if Jenner was an honest witness, it is scarcely possible to believe that 'the experiments of inoculation' with small-pox after vaccination showed that the latter had no protective influence." But, in the first place, a scientific doctrine should scarcely rest on Jenner's veracity, in which I for one have the smallest confidence. And, in the second place, the analysis of these experiments by Dr. Charles Creighton, in his excellent book on "Jenner and Vaccination," and by Dr. Collins and Mr. Picton, in their portion of the Report, are conclusive against their logical value as a sufficient foundation for the vaccination doctrine. What can be the use of appealing to Jenner's trustworthiness as a witness for the success of the variolous test when we have plenty of uncontested cases of persons recently vaccinated taking small-pox and dying of it?

* *Jenner and Vaccination*. By Charles Creighton, M.D., pp. 66-7.

As regards the statistics, you must bear in mind that the statements summed up in them are statements made by one of the parties to this controversy, and the one which is pecuniarily and professionally interested in the defence of vaccination. Dr. J. H. Bridges, in the current number of the *Positivist Review*, writing of the risks attendant on vaccination, says: "Medical statistics cannot be quite trustworthy on this point, from the nature of the case. A doctor vaccinating a child will obviously be unwilling to say that vaccination did harm, unless he is a man above the ordinary standard of courage and conscientiousness." Now this same consideration applies to the medical statistics of vaccination generally. This bias, which Dr. Bridges is candid enough to admit, vitiates the medical discrimination between vaccinated and unvaccinated cases of small-pox. It vitiates the grouping of the figures which determine the statistical results. It vitiates the inferences which are drawn from those results.

There is nothing the public is more helpless about than statistics. The remark is frequently heard that statistics can be made to prove anything. But this, of course, is so only because fallacious methods of proof are accepted. The medical profession, who are, as a body, very deficient in logical training, are as ignorant as other people on this subject. They are no authorities at all on any statistical matter.

Not only is the enforcement of vaccination a most iniquitous invasion of parental rights, but vaccination itself is utterly valueless as a prophylactic against small-pox; its use is attended with very grievous risks, and it draws off attention and energy from efficacious methods of combating disease.

And now I have a few words to say to you, in conclusion, on the specially Jewish aspect of this question. We people of Hebrew race have passed through many centuries of the most terrible persecution—persecution of which there has been a cruel revival in our times. We have been shut out from occupations which give vigour to the frame. We have been shut up in unwholesome Ghettos. We have suffered all the mental strain which is involved in insecurity. And still we have come out with a physique which is a marvel to

scientific men, which is a matter of just congratulation to ourselves, and which ought to be a matter of serious study for all men. Now a large, if not the largest, factor of this result is, in my opinion, the wonderfully wise hygienic code which Jews have made a matter of religious observance. This code may be summed up as follows:— (1) It was forbidden to take into the human body any unwholesome or diseased animal matter. (2) Personal cleanliness was strictly enjoined. (3) Humanity and consideration towards the lower animals was directly and indirectly made an object of constant care.—Some animals were entirely forbidden as food. Others might be eaten, but individually they were to be submitted to the closest scrutiny, so as to exclude diseased specimens. Animals irregularly killed were not to be eaten, cruelty being thus kept in check. The mixture of animals and plants of different species, and still more the mixture of the animal and the human, was placed under the strictest ban. Cleanliness was not put next to godliness, but incorporated in it.

If I have carried you with me so far, I think you will agree with me that the spirit, if not the letter, of ancient Judaism is antagonistic to that combined system of vivisection and inoculation which Jenner may be regarded as having initiated. I think I am right in saying that no *shohhet* would kill for Jewish food a calf suffering from cow-pox. If I am not right in this, I ought to be. But what could be more absurd than to prohibit the eating of the flesh of such a calf on account of its disease, and still taking the matter of that disease and inserting it directly in the blood of our healthy children? This seems to me to be a clear violation of the spirit of all the three branches of the ancient Judaic law which I have mentioned. As unclean matter, as morbid matter, as beastly matter, it is alike repugnant to the essence of the old Jewish code to mix it with the life-blood of a Jewish child. That is my opinion, and I am not to be moved from it by any mere dogmatic assertion of ecclesiastical authority. The people of Israel were misled once before by the ecclesiastical authorities in the matter of a calf, while the prophet was seeking inspiration in the Mount.

Brothers and sisters of Israel! Be reverent, as is your wont, to superior intelligence, width and depth of culture,

and loftiness of character. But be not cowed by the mere assertion of authority. Did not our prophet Nathan, in vindication of justice, face the greatest authority in all Judea, make him convict himself out of his own mouth, and say to him : " Thou art the man ! " When the law of this country forbade the election of Jews to Parliament, did Baron Rothschild bow meekly to this law ? No ; he presented himself time after time as a candidate, and got elected. Alderman Salomons went still farther, and, in spite of the law, presented himself in the House of Commons. Later on, Mr. Bradlaugh insisted still more vigorously on his right. There were no more loyal and law-abiding Englishmen than these three men ; but they opposed a passive resistance to an unjust law, and, if the road to the House of Commons is not today blocked with religious disabilities, we owe it to what these men and their supporters did for us.

If, when Lady Mary Wortley Montagu introduced inoculation into this country, in the last century, the Jewish authorities had been animated with the spirit which nerved our prophets of old, they would at once have put in a protest, on the part of the Jewish people, against this doctrine of salvation by animal filth. A grand opportunity was thus missed. We might have stemmed the tide of inoculationist and vivisectionist superstition which has since made such inroads in Europe. Even if we were unsuccessful, the day of our triumph would come. The feet of clay of this idol are being washed away by the torrent of evidence which is being poured in upon them. It is visibly tottering ; and the early years of the next century will probably see its final fall.

Let us try to hasten that day. If you share my convictions on this subject, petition the Local Government Board, setting forth your conscientious objections to the vaccination law. If any considerable number of you sign such a petition, I do not believe that any British Government would continue to force on you a system to which you had, in respectful and temperate language, expressed yourselves opposed, on grounds which are certain to command respect.

In the meantime, I ask you to agree to the following resolution :—That this meeting hereby expresses its opinion that the vaccination laws violate important principles of

hygiene and justice, and calls for the speedy abolition of all provisions by which the action of those laws is made compulsory.

This resolution was seconded by Mr. Alfred Milnes, M.A., in a most eloquent and pathetic speech, supported by Mr. Rooke, and carried without a single dissentient voice.—Mr. J. F. Haines moved:—"That this meeting votes its hearty thanks to the Whitechapel Guardians that there have been no prosecutions since the imprisonment of Mr. Henry Levy."—Mr. J. H. Lynn seconded this in a brief speech, and Mr. J. R. Brunning supported it.—On this resolution being put to the meeting, Mr. Defries (Beadle of the Great Synagogue) interposed, and said he desired to make a few remarks, which were cheerfully listened to. He confessed to having learned much that evening. But he was a father of fifteen children. In 1892, they all took small-pox. Some were taken to the hospital ships. All had the disease mildly and recovered; but the message brought back from the hospital ships was that all those who were not vaccinated had the disease in a confluent form, and he thanked God that his children were vaccinated.—Mr. Milnes and Mr. Beurle pointed out the errors in this statement. Mr. Beurle, who is on the Small-pox Committee of the Metropolitan Asylums Board, said he had seen upwards of 4,000 cases of small-pox, in performance of his duties, in all shades of mildness and severity, vaccinated and unvaccinated. Notwithstanding that he had never been vaccinated, he had never taken the disease, in facing the whole of those cases. Nor was there any difference between the two classes of cases, vaccinated and unvaccinated. One man whom he saw and spoke to four hours before his death was covered—a complete mass of black small-pox. He asked him if he was vaccinated. He answered: "Yes; in four places, and have three very good marks."—Mr. Lynn also mentioned that he went through the hospital ships' books with the medical superintendent, and they could not discover any difference between the two classes of cases.—Mr. Hunns moved a vote of thanks to Mr. J. H. Levy.—On seconding this, Mr. Collins, of the Whitechapel Board of Works, took occasion to say that the Vaccination Committee had not been discharged, but it had been enlarged into a committee of the whole Board.—The vote

was carried by acclamation, and responded to by Mr. Levy in a short speech.—A vote of thanks to the chairman terminated the proceedings of an earnest meeting.

On 2nd January, 1897, the following letter appeared in the *East London Advertiser* and the *East London Observer* :—

THE CHIEF RABBI ON "VACCINATION AND THE DIVINE LAW."

Sir,—In his reply to Mr. Harris, of the Whitechapel Board of Guardians, Dr. Adler stated that the use of vaccination is "in perfect consonance with the letter and spirit of Judaism." He contented himself with this dogmatic statement and with an aspersion of my "authority." He has now "gone one better" than this. The *Jewish Chronicle* of the 18th December states: "We are authorized by the Chief Rabbi to state that there is no foundation whatever for the allegation reported to have been made at the Worship Street Police-court on Wednesday last by a Jew who had been summoned for neglecting to have his child vaccinated that there existed an objection on religious grounds to the use of vaccination. Since this process has been proved by the most eminent authorities to be a safeguard against small-pox, and inasmuch as an Act of Parliament renders its use obligatory, a Jew who refuses to have his child vaccinated at the proper time is guilty of a grave infraction both of the Divine Law and the law of the land."

The "since" and "inasmuch" of the above are delightful specimens of Rabbinical logic. They imply that everything which is proved (to the satisfaction of Dr. Adler) by the medical authorities which he considers the most eminent, and is made obligatory by Act of Parliament, has the force of Divine Law. What will happen to the Divine Law when the most eminent medical authorities change their minds on this subject and the compulsory law is repealed I do not know, for I am under the impression that it is a principle of Judaism that the Divine Law never changes. I desire, however, to point out that when I wanted to find out what ancient Judaism has to say on this subject I consulted the Pentateuch, while the Chief Rabbi consults the Statute Book and the *British Medical Journal*, and gives the result as the

Divine Law. This method has no particular application to vaccination. A short time ago the same sort of preponderance of medical opinion backed up by an Act of Parliament could have been pleaded for the system embodied in the Contagious Diseases Acts. Were these also divine ?

As for Dr. Adler's pretension to decide for another man that there exists no objection to vaccination on religious grounds, this appears to me the height of arrogance. Every man, Jew or not Jew, is the custodian of his own conscience, and the judge of what that conscience permits for him in the religious sphere ; and the right of any ecclesiastic to come unsolicited between the individual and his own judgment of religious duty is one which I hope my fellow Israelites will never concede.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

J. H. LEVY.

At the meeting of the Whitechapel Board of Guardians, on 29th December, 1896, a letter was read from the Chief Rabbi to the above effect ; and the Guardians consequently resolved to issue summonses against several Jewish defaulters, who were thus prosecuted as a direct result of the Chief Rabbi's interference. We shall be much surprised if this do not tend to hasten the downfall of that system of coercion which Dr. Adler has thus helped to sustain.

PAMPHLETS

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

PRICE ONE PENNY.

THE BIRD
THAT
LAI D THE VACCINATION EGG:
AN EXCURSUS ON SCIENTIFIC AUTHORITY.

PRICE ONE PENNY.

FREEDOM
THE
FUNDAMENTAL CONDITION OF MORALITY.

PRICE ONE PENNY.

THE ENFRANCHISEMENT OF WOMEN.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

THE
ECONOMICS OF LABOUR REMUNERATION.

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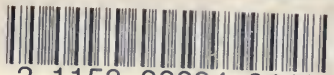
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